

subsequent intrigues of the Whigs with O'Connell and the consequent retirement of Lord Grey on their discovery had reduced the mighty reform Parliament in spite of their apparently overwhelming majority to a very low ebb in public opinion; but the nation at large was impressed with an idea that from their reconstruction of the constituency they were our masters for life. I had then no political relations, though I had had overtures from Durham, who offered to return me to Parliament. I had conversation with him, but he appeared to me to have no definite plan. Lord L. thought the time had arrived when the movement, might be stopped. He was looking about for a party to put in motion which might not seem factious. After some consultation he resolved that the Ministers should be thrown in a minority on some agricultural amendment at the meeting of Parliament, and I agreed to see Lord Chandos, with whom I had a county acquaintance, on the subject.

I went into the country therefore to attend some meeting of our agricultural committee. We agreed to petition Parliament on the Malt Tax, and I was requested to prepare the county petition to the House of Commons, which I did. After business was over I took Lord C. aside and it was settled that I should go over with him to Wotton and talk over affairs. The result of our conference was this — being, I think, the 11th November—that he undertook to organise a country party and throw the Government in a minority on Parliament meeting by an agricultural amendment on the address. He required for himself the First Lord of the Admiralty, but told me then that he was assured, from some communication he had received, that the Duke would recommend Peel as Premier. He made no terms for any other country leader except Knatchbull, who, he stipulated, should have a seat in the Cabinet.

In the evening of the 12th I arrived in town on my return and immediately had an interview with L. who told me the Duke of W. had arrived that day and that Lord Spencer was dead, which, by-the-bye, I had heard at Wotton as I was departing. Chandos, hurrying my departure, as he said he thought this was the last blow to the Cabinet. Lord L. immediately wrote to the D. requesting an interview, and afterwards appointed me to meet him at his private room in the Exchequer the morning of the 14th, at 2 o'clock, to hear the result. The Duke fixed the evening of the 13th for the interview, and I wrote to Lord C. accordingly.

Lord L. had accordingly his interview with the D. on the evening of the 13th, and opened his plan; but the D.

¹ Lyndhurst was Chief Baron.